

[Jane Hutchinson]

Beliefs and Customs - Life Histories

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Winnsboro, S. C. 6/25/[?] trans 390570 FAIRFIELD COUNTY JANE HUTCHINSON

(white) 82 YEARS OLD.

Jane Hutchinson lives in the village of Monticello, Fairfield County, S. C. She owns her home and the three surrounding acres of land. She is much venerated by the people in the community and respected at home and abroad as an authority on unpublished local history. She is still spry for her age, and I found her, hoe in hand, attending to her garden March 11, 1938.

"Well, what has fetched you over here? Is you the Wood Dixon that stretches your blanket in the Fairfield [News?] and [Herald?] so often? Well, well, I'm happy to see you and set you straight on some things that I know more about than you. Why your mammy, Sallie Woodward, went to school right in this town, to old Mr. Hazel Zealy, while the war was going on.

"How old is I? Last Sunday I was eighty-two years old and spry as a cricket. Bet I can out run you to the door of my house yonder, and when we git there this half-bull pup will be sitting on the top step waiting for the door to open.

"Who are these men you got with you? Strangers ain't they? Well, glad to see you all, and the first thing I wants to know is can you all stay and take a bite of dinner with me? No? Well, I've showed my manners, anyway, by inviting you to break bread with me.

"My father, Archibald Hutchinson, came from Ireland; my mother, Anne Jane McCullough, came from County Antrim, Ireland. They came over first to New York 2 and gradually made their way down to Monticello. They had only one other child, my brother, Robert, two

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years older than me, who is dead. My father was a tailor by trade, and, this neighborhood being thickly settled by rich land owners and slaveholders, he moved here about 1848, so he said.

"My people being plain working folks, I didn't take part in the great 'to do's,' such as cotillion dances and all kinds of parties. My father made the fashionable clothes for the men - broadcloth coats, nankeen trousers, and showy westcoats - and mother was kept busy making riding coats, polonaise dresses, and riding skirts. You know ladies rode on horseback in those times, but not straddle-wise, or straddle-legged, as they do now; they had sidesaddles. It will always be a mystery to me how the girls could sit sideways on spirited horses, race them, and stay on and not tumble off; they could though. Well, we kept in our tailor shop hoops and bustles, the style in those days for women folks. Ladies' hats have changed as much as any part of their dress. The larger the hat and the more ostrich plumes on it, the more fashionable a woman was regarded.

"I was a small child before the war. My mother, however, was always invited to the quilting parties and, in a measure, was chief superintendent of the work. Not far removed from African savagery, the Negro slaves did not require much attention as to clothing. The older ones received some warm clothing in winter and wooden-bottom shoes in winter. You can see from here (indicating) where old Mr. Kelly had his tannery. When the Yankees came in their raids they went to the tannery and with their bayonets punched holes in every hide and side of leather Mr. Kelly had down there.

"You can see the Turkey Jim Davis house yonder (indicating), where Kilpatrick, in charge of the Yankee cavalry, made his headquarters. The house belongs 3 to Mr. Sam Robinson now. Why was it called Turkey Jim Davis house? Well, you see it was built by Dr. James Davis in slavery time. Dr. Davis' mother was Rebecca Kincaid, daughter of old Capt. Kincaid who operated the first cotton gin in the world, they say. He got the idea from the way he pulled the cockle burs out of the wool he sheared from his sheep. But let me get back to Dr. Davis. He was the largest cotton planter of his time. The Sultan of Turkey

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heard about him, from the United States Ambassador over there, and he offered him a high salary, for six years, to come over to Turkey and show the Turks how to plant, cultivate, and produce cotton and git it into lint. The Turks are a lazy set. He found out he couldn't get work out of them in the cotton fields over there. He cussed and reared around among them and kicked up such a fuss that the Sultan paid him the salary for the six years and let him come home. The assistant took Dr. Davis' place in supervising the cotton raising. Dr. Davis said he found a great difference in working Negro slaves and in working Turks.

“On his return, he brought with him a jackass, an arabian Arabian stallion, some mares, cashmere goats, a peculiar cow, called the bramah cow, and shanghai chickens. He was known as Dr. Turkey Jim Davis. The cows were white. The one I remember of the increase, years after, was called “Snow Ball.’ The milk was sweeter than ordinary cow's milk, and children were very fond of it.

“Both my parents joined the Old Brick Church, back yonder on Little River. Rev. C. E. McDonald, in a sketch of the old church printed in a book entitled, 'The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.' said: 'Mrs. Hutchinson, a member of the church, remembered hearing her mother and others tell that, after the crops were laid by, their fathers and grandfathers would go to the brickyard and tramp the mud into mortar with their bare feet, put it into mould with their hands, carry it out into the sun to dry, and then burn the kilns 4 by night and day, and that the church was completed in 1788.' It stands today as strong and as solid as at first, showing that men of ye olden times did their work well. This is the church building where the South Carolina Synod of the A. R. P. denomination met for the first time.

“The Yankees crossed at Freshley's Ferry and came on through to Monticello. The officers were courteous gentlemen, the rank-and-file ruffians, bent on plunder and every kind of mischief. A detail of soldiers were allowed to protect the boarding school. It was located about where Mrs. Nan McMeeking lives now. When the soldiers marched

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away and reached the Old Brick Church on the banks of Little River, they found that the Confederates had destroyed the bridge. They tore up the flooring of the church building and used it, in part, to construct a bridge, over which they marched.

"We didn't have round dances in our day and time, but, at the end of a quilting party, we danced the Virginia reel, steal partners, and the clog; and played 'thimble' and 'heavy heavy hangs over your head.' We had sewing bees often during the war, to make clothing and socks for the soldiers. Yes, I remember the candy pullings had by the young people. A boy and girl did the pulling, with melted butter on their hands to keep the sweet stuff from sticking to them.

"During and awhile after the war, coffee and sugar was scarce as hens' teeth. A substitute for coffee was parched corn, and for sugar, sorgum or molasses. Well, as I was a poor girl, I don't know much about the southern hospitality and the visiting around of the blue-bloods; and, as I never married, you'd better ask somebody that has been married and had a whole passel of children about family life in them days.

"The first public school in Monticello after the war was taught by Capt.

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Hayne McMeekin, a graduate of the South Carolina College. Some said he was tinctured with atheism that he took from old Prof. Cooper at the college. In spite of it, though, he made a good teacher, was a good man, and late in life joined the Baptist Church. When he quit teaching, he went to farming. He was elected to the legislature and later became county treasurer. His memory is treasured here now for the good that he did, while many of the names of the blue-bloods and aristocrats are forgotten.

"By people not being among the gentry, I know very little about slave quarters or slave rations. I only know that every slave owner, being anxious to increase the number of his

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slaves, caused the females to bear children too early in life, but an owner had a doctor to look after the health of the slaves as faithfully as he did his own family.

“I remember old Governor John Hugh Means that introduced the Means grass in this section. Some call it Egyptian grass, and some, Johnson grass. I've heard that Gov. Johnson of Alabama got the seed from Egypt and sent some to Governor Means when he (Means) was governor in 1852. The old governor was a tall, red-faced, fiery man, hot for secession; but he did have the nobleness to go to war, and he got killed at Bull Run, while most of the other fiery-mouthed politicians stayed at home.

“You must go by and see Miss Nan (Mrs. McMeekin), and I'm sure she can give you all the book learning and old newspaper accounts of the sayings and doings in old-time Monticello.”